

A Report on
Maryland Charter School Training Needs and Strengths
based on the assessments of charter school stakeholders

as commissioned by
the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools
with grant support from the Charter Schools Office
of the Maryland State Department of Education

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Submitted by Greater Capacity Consortium
May 31, 2019



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Overview

As part of its federal grant to support the start-up of new public charter schools and the expansion and replication of high-quality existing charter operators in the state, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) awarded a contract in late January 2019 to the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) to provide training and support. One of the first requirements for MAPCS was to conduct a needs and strengths assessment of charter schools that identifies areas of success and need among current public charter schools that can be addressed through customized workshops, webinars, school-to-school sharing, and other means.

MAPCS engaged Greater Capacity Consortium—a national nonprofit organization with thirteen years of experience in Maryland and across 27 other states in service to high-quality charter schooling—to independently conduct the needs and strengths assessment. This assessment was conducted through two mediums: (1) an online survey designed to efficiently gain the input of a range of charter school operators and related stakeholders, and (2) a series of one-on-one interviews from a few community-based organizations (CBOs) that have education reform missions and with the charter school “liaison” personnel from the six local school systems that are actively authorizing charter schools in Maryland.

The survey and interview findings contained in this report are intended to inform the high priority areas for training and technical support and also shed light on which of the high need areas may be points of strength for other Maryland charter schools and, thus, ripe for school-to-school sharing.

Executive Summary

The scores and comments by survey respondents and the comments of interviewees reflect a strong sense of accomplishment among those in the Maryland charter school sector. While there are discernable patterns in the strengths and needs improvement areas, there is also the impression that most have mastered the fundamentals of what is generally expected of a charter school. It is clear charter schools face some challenges (some more than others), but the comments convey a continued zeal for charter schooling coupled with a certain confidence at least among the survey respondents (operators, directors, administrators, principals and a few board members) that they recognize what needs done, will rise to meet the challenges and persevere.

This observation hints at a certain level of maturity of the charter school scene in Maryland. More than half of the survey respondents indicated they had six or more years of involvement with Maryland charter schools. Similarly, most of the CBO and school system staff interviewed have been in their positions for a comparable amount of time. Indeed, the vast majority of Maryland charter schools (47) opened by 2012; so the perspectives of most of those involved is tempered or weathered by years of relevant experience.

Three-fourths of the survey respondents checked that their charter school is already part of a network of multiple sites or considering expansion (adding grades) or replication (opening more sites). This, too, is likely an indication of the higher level of quality charter school operators who may be in the survey response pool.

The survey comments also reveal a willingness to share what is working well by those with identifiable strengths. Similarly, there is a receptivity on the part of those needing to improve to take and trust in the guidance of their charter school peers. Hopefully, MAPCS will be able to tap into this *esprit de corps* through future school-to-school sharing initiatives.

Strengths.

The highest rated attributes in the survey indicate that charter school respondents have a strong confidence in the innovativeness of their curricular approaches, including efforts at personalized learning, using academic data to drive such student interventions and fostering a positive school culture and a safe learning environment for students.

Strong survey ratings and comments also indicate that the responding charter schools have settled into positive operator and principal collaborations, attained good teacher buy-in to their missions, mastered the board governance fundamentals (e.g., financial oversight, budgeting, conflicts of interest, open meeting and public records protocols) and enjoy solid community support and positive authorizer relations.

This matches up with some of the interview commentary from the school system “liaison” staff. Overall, such staff gave high marks for innovative instructional practices, teacher empowerment and positive school culture and climate. Most “liaison” staff cited board governance, however, as an area where more training is needed and that collaboration between the system, principal and charter school boards also needed strengthened. Part of the disconnect could be that the “liaison” staff have top of mind those charter schools that are closer to the novice stage or continue to receive troubling oversight reviews. Regardless, it would appear some school-to-school sharing might help raise the bar in some of the fundamental areas of charter school board governance and operator-principal collaborations.

Needs Improvement Areas.

Among the lowest rated attributes in the survey is a near universal concern that the results on statewide assessments (MSA/PARCC) are not where charter school leaders want them to be. Most feel good about their overall progress in closing achievement gaps, but do not think the PARCC results are the best gauge of student abilities, and there is acknowledgement, too, that the PARCC will not be in use much longer.

The lack of financing for facilities is another major concern, which can have negative ripple effects on overall learning. As one respondent put it, “everything relates to funding in the end.” Acquiring, renovating or expanding facilities is especially difficult to make happen without any

dedicated funding source. On average in the USA, public schools spend an estimated \$1,500 per pupil on a combination of capital outlays for facilities and interest on capital-related debt (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010-11). Facilities costs would be substantially higher than this average figure in most Maryland jurisdictions currently served by charter schools. Training on facilities finance options as well as on fundraising and resource development in general are key needs respondents identified.

The level of parent involvement seems to be a rising concern; one respondent explained that “parents believe the school is doing fine and needs no help, so they don’t get involved.” Selecting quality board members also received a relatively low rating.

Many of the areas where some survey respondents seem to be struggling can be supported by others who tagged the same attribute as a strength. Special education, for example, presents challenges for some while others, like this respondent, offered to share practices “in all areas related to special education, from instruction to behavior to compliance.”

Teacher recruitment and retention is a growing concern (also nationwide), though some respondents boast of 90 percent or higher retention. Similarly, a few respondents are having challenges with student enrollment and attendance.

Coming in with the lowest rating is tracking student success after graduation, which prompted many comments for help from anyone who has a good handle on alumni tracking.

One additional observation is that most charter schools are not turning to their school systems for training. Many commented that the systems have very little that is meaningful to offer them. While most of the school system “liaison” staff explained that their professional development is equally available to charter schools, survey respondents seemed to be questioning the relatability of such offerings to their charter school experience.

Hopefully, this brief summary of the overall strengths and needs improvements areas has helped whet the appetite of the reader to delve deeply into each component of the survey and interview commentary that follow.

Design and Methodology

Greater Capacity Consortium is a nonprofit network of practitioners established in 2006 that is dedicated to growing the capacity of public sector organizations to govern and lead effectively.

Following the award of the MSDE contract on January 23, MAPCS and Greater Capacity pulled together a small ad hoc group in early February to provide informal input into the design of the assessment tools. This group included experienced charter school leaders, educators, funders and policy researchers. On the basis of this input, the interview protocol as well as the survey instrument was drafted for MSDE’s review. Principal Consultant Mark Cannon conducted the series of phone interviews of the CBO and school system staff primarily in March. The online survey was open from April 3 through May 13.

To gain the most candid feedback especially about needs improvement areas, assurances were offered to all interview and survey participants that responses would be tabulated by Greater Capacity without attribution and reported only in the aggregate or summary form. It was noted that school identifiers would be shared with MAPCS for internal use only to follow up about training opportunities matched to the survey data.

MAPCS promoted the online survey through a staggered series of emails and at charter school events during the open period. MAPCS offered a random prize drawing of a \$100 gift card as an incentive to complete the survey. The outreach was mostly to operators of charter schools and networks. To capture diverse perspectives, multiple respondents from a charter school were permitted and operators were encouraged to share the survey link with board members, administrators, teachers, parents, school alumni, community members and others who may be able to provide added insights. Based on these survey promotion methods, respondents are not fully randomized; thus, results are subject to typical self-selection biases.

Greater Capacity conducted nine interviews and received 27 survey responses from 16 different charter schools or networks. Based on a sample size of 32 operators supporting 49 charter schools, the survey results reflect a nearly one-third response rate of all charter schools. This level of response for its sample size enables results to be generalized with 95% confidence with a +/- 5% confidence interval.

Organization of the Report

The findings are reported in five sections. First, the report begins with an analysis of the survey responses to approximately 50 points of quantitative inquiry and accompanying open-ended commentary. Second, the report summarizes the observations from the interviews with CBO and school system staff. Third, the report chronicles the comments of survey respondents to several general points of inquiry. Fourth, the report features the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Fifth, the report touches on the cross-tabulation of attributes and rank orders all attributes from high to low. And finally, Exhibit A features a copy of the online survey.

I. Survey Findings – Quantitative Ratings & Related Comments

The quantitative portion of the survey attempted to register the intensity of respondent's feelings around various charter school attributes on a five-point Likert scale. In this way, a weighted average calculation was rendered for each attribute, which allowed attributes in a grouping to be comparatively ranked.

The attributes were grouped into the following general categories below:

- A. Teaching and Learning
- B. General School Matters
- C. Additional School Matters
- D. Board Governance
- E. Expansion and Replication (optional)

A. Teaching and Learning

In the "Teaching and Learning" section, the vast majority of charter school respondents gave high marks for the innovativeness of their curricular approaches while nearly half of respondents considered their school's achievement on standardized tests to be just in the satisfactory range, especially the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) in use in Maryland between 2014 and 2019. While most feel good about their overall progress in closing achievement gaps, several feel the PARCC results are proving not to be the best

reflection of this. A third of respondents are struggling and could use help to raise their PARCC achievement scores to a level where they would prefer them to be.

Three-fifths of respondents feel good about their use of academic data to drive student interventions while a couple respondents said they could use some help in this area. Similarly, several respondents were proud of their special education approaches and willing to share their successes whereas others expressed frustration that they wish, in particular, they had the financial wherewithal to do more for their special needs population. Several respondents had little to no experience with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), but are expecting more of an influx of students needing ESOL services in the future. Those respondents (4) suggesting they could use help on more effective coaching or mentoring of teachers are double the number of respondents (2) who cite it as a strength; nearly half of all respondents (12), though, feel very good about their coaching or mentoring practices.

Teaching and Learning: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" on the following scale: [If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]						
	1 - Needs Improvement; can use help	2 - Struggling some; maybe could use some help	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Very good; may have some tips to share	5 - A strength; we can support others with this	Rating score
Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.						
Innovative curricular approaches	0 0%	1 4%	3 12%	9 36%	12 48%	4.3
Individualized attention teachers give to support student learning	0 0%	0 0%	5 19%	16 62%	5 19%	4.0
Use of academic data to guide instructional decision-making	0 0%	1 4%	9 35%	10 38%	6 23%	3.8
Use of academic data to drive student interventions	0 0%	2 8%	8 31%	10 38%	6 23%	3.8
Special Education: compliance	0 0%	0 0%	13 50%	6 23%	7 27%	3.8
Special Education: instructional techniques	0 0%	1 4%	12 48%	9 36%	3 12%	3.6
Differentiated instruction - students achieve to their full potential	0 0%	3 12%	10 38%	10 38%	3 12%	3.5
Coaching or mentoring of teachers	0 0%	4 16%	7 28%	12 48%	2 8%	3.5
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	0 0%	4 18%	12 55%	5 23%	1 5%	3.1
Achievement on standardized tests (i.e., PARCC)	1 4%	7 27%	13 50%	4 15%	1 4%	2.9

Strengths: [Comments from survey respondents.]

Our teachers do an excellent job of working with their students to motivate them to work on projects, complete homework assignments and engage in class activities and instruction.

Small class sizes and additional support staff allow students to get additional instruction.

Adapt to children's needs and have unique opportunities to support learning.

We have great teacher coaching and PD. Our small group instruction and intervention is strong in most classrooms.

Data is used to determine student achievement and growth. Staff regularly analyze data to determine what strategies are working.

Supporting all teachers in using arts integration to support core content instruction, including meaningful opportunities for student choice during the school day.

Art-integration, place-based and project-based learning are our innovations. We have an arts integration specialist that works with teachers to develop lessons incorporating the use of art.

We are great with differentiated instruction and supporting teach to lead programs.

We have extensive experience with the use of data to make instructional and behavioral decisions.

The focus on data; analyzing evidences to understand skills and standards that students need to have in order to be successful

We continue to have a large population of students who need individualized attention and teaching. The schools are excelling in giving attention to this area and meet the ever growing need associated with special education needs.

We have a strong team of special educators that take compliance very seriously and make themselves available to the whole student body.

I know our Special Ed team is really strong although I honestly couldn't tell you what they do better than others because they just own it.

We can share in all areas related to special education, from instruction to behavior to compliance. We can work with teachers on a number of classroom management strategies.

Use of blended learning is a strength.

Innovative teaching methods, supporting teacher growth and development (mentoring, supporting new teachers, developing aspiring teachers). We have become stronger in UDL (Universal Design for Learning).

Between 82-85% of our 8th graders qualify for the best high schools in Baltimore City, as well as private schools. This is due to the teachers careful, differentiated instruction...most of our teachers are excellent with parent communication, which also helps them partner with the school to prepare their children for the next level of academics, high school.

We are a Montessori school that is close to being fully accredited through the American Montessori Society. While we are not perfect by any means, we are pretty strong in many areas. Our Montessori Teacher Specialist could help with curriculum and administrative questions concerning teacher certification, parent education, and other administrative matters.

All our teachers are experts at their specific level in Montessori instruction.

Our Mission and Vision are simple by intent: to maximize the individual potential of each student. Through various approaches to STEM/STEAM education, we seek ways to consistently deliver world-class programs to our families. Collaborative workshops for best practices can be arranged and we would be delighted to participate as both learners and teachers at such workshops.

The Principal in our charter school demonstrates not only the ability but the interest in collecting and utilizing data to inform instruction. This data is regularly shared with the staff.

The curriculum and projects that are engaging and inter-disciplinary might be worth sharing.

The organic way student voice is nurtured and the pattern of students helping other students - teaching peers is the highest form of mastery.

Our early childhood program has lots of practices across the domains (e.g., literacy, numeracy, social emotional) that are definitely worth sharing.

Needs Improvement Areas: [Comments from survey respondents.]

Some teachers enter our school not knowing our curriculum model and need some coaching or assistance in making it happen in their classrooms.

We are still struggling to find the right structure for mentoring new (or, new-to-us) teachers. Would love best practices from other schools that are really excelling here.

In literacy instruction, differentiation seems to be easier to implement than math. Some strategies on how to make this work, especially in 3rd-5th grades would be useful.

Our differentiation is strong in some classes, and not so strong in others.

Finding and using reliable, meaningful academic data - and the use of data cycles around that meaningful data could be helpful.

Use of data to revise instruction.

Our PARCC scores have been showing slow but steady progress, but are still far below where we need them to be. We would particularly like best practices of how schools with success in this area ensure that students not only know the content, but are also "test ready" - that navigating the test itself is not the primary barrier. We have been trying a variety of strategies here but have not hit our stride yet.

Our PARCC scores don't reflect student achievement. We are improving but insight to how others are doing it would be useful.

Our PARCC scores need to improve....some grades score well and others are struggling...our analysis tells us that teachers who struggle with class management also struggle with test scores.

Our PARCC data needs to improve, but we also do not think this test is the best gauge of our students' abilities. And it will not be used much longer.

Though our standardized test scores are deemed satisfactory per MSDE, we know that there is work to do to get to where we reach our goal of high academic achievement.

We have the privilege of serving a diverse student body. We have, however, noticed concerning trends in academic performance on standardized tests that fall along racial lines.

Achievement gap.

Although we provide a well-rounded curriculum and our PARCC assessment is above the city average, we are still struggling in insuring the proficiency of the majority of our students. That is the ultimate goal of any educational program.

I think that this is generally true of all schools, but we do not have sufficient special education staff to give the students the experience we want them to have in school. We give them what we are obligated to by law, but we would like to give them more in alignment with your school's chartered goals.

We have extensive experience with students with disabilities. We need more financial stability to help with the special education pieces.

We do not have many speakers of other languages at our school.

We have no ESOL students.

We do not provide any ELL services.

We are also seeing an emerging ESOL population and are more novice in that arena.

We do not have ELL students; however, we are starting to see a wave of these students.

While coaching and mentoring of teacher is rated at "3- satisfactory" effort are continually exerted, mostly, as an in-house process rather than in a setting that exposes our teachers to the larger teaching community on a regular and consistent basis. This needs to happen to be related to availability of resources (funds), the development of a plan that is detailed enough to address the school and community needs.

Maximizing the time and resources available to get even more laser focused on academic progress without compromising the best the school has to offer in terms of the engaging curriculum and projects etc. Making sure everyone is clear what to do when a student is struggling and there is a sense of urgency and optimism that progress is possible and necessary.

B. General School Attributes

Among "General School" attributes, three-fourths of charter school respondents gave high marks for cultivating a positive school climate. Student recruitment and retention is an interesting area where the 10 respondents who cite it as a strength may be able to impart some good lessons for the 3 respondents that are struggling and another 10 who only rate their schools in the satisfactory range. Behavioral intervention is a struggle for one-fifth of respondents who may be able to benefit from the few respondents who commented that

restorative practices are a well-honed model for them. A few charter schools also seem to be blazing a trail with intentional professional development on diversity, equity and inclusion that could benefit a greater number who peg their efforts as satisfactory. Lastly, one-fourth of respondents are looking for help with parent involvement, especially in ways that motivate parents to move beyond turnout for events to more meaningful engagement.

General School Matters: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" on the following scale: [If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]						
Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1 - Needs Improvement; can use help	2 - Struggling some; maybe could use some help	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Very good; may have some tips to share	5 - A strength; we can support others with this	Rating score
Positive school climate	0 0%	0 0%	6 23%	14 54%	6 23%	4.0
Diversity, equity and inclusion	0 0%	2 8%	11 42%	7 27%	6 23%	3.7
Student recruitment and retention	1 4%	2 8%	10 38%	3 12%	10 38%	3.7
Teacher retention	2 8%	1 4%	6 23%	12 46%	5 19%	3.7
Support for families	0 0%	2 8%	6 23%	18 69%	0 0%	3.6
Community engagement	1 4%	1 4%	8 31%	13 50%	3 12%	3.6
Cultural competency of the staff	0 0%	3 12%	11 42%	7 27%	5 19%	3.5
Behavioral assessment and intervention (e.g., restorative practices)	0 0%	5 19%	9 35%	8 31%	4 15%	3.4
Creating a diverse pipeline of teachers	0 0%	5 19%	10 38%	8 31%	3 12%	3.3
Parent involvement	1 4%	5 19%	10 38%	7 27%	3 12%	3.2

Strengths: [Comments from survey respondents.]

We could share strategies for school climate, such as developing three commitments and supporting families via counseling resources.

Equity and cultural competency - our staff's journey here is not complete (and probably never will be) but we have made tremendous growth over the last two years. We developed a school equity statement, we have participated in very intentional professional development in these areas, and have challenged ourselves greatly.

We could share experience of equity audit and PD.

We have made huge strides in changing the composition of our teacher pipeline to include much more diversity - race, gender, age, and more. There is no magic answer here but we can certainly share our journey.

After implementing Restorative Practices, refocusing on our core framework of Responsive Classroom this year, and redesigning how we handle student behavior intervention, our

suspensions YTD are down 60% from last year and 79% from the year before. Our path to this change also involved drawing from best practices at other charter schools. We can share how we accomplished this change.

I won't go item by item, but our school's commitment to inclusion and cultural competency is very high. We've dedicated a lot of PD to the issue. We've committed to hiring more African American teachers. Restorative practices has always been a part of our model and we've worked hard to create a behavioral intervention strategy that supports the student and the classroom. We've dedicated space to reset students who are struggling to behave in the classroom. We have dedicated staff that push in to support struggling students in the classroom so they don't miss class time.

Strong community partnerships.

We consistently have 90-95% student retention from year to year and 90-100% teacher retention.

We have strong structures for parent involvement. We have high teacher retention. And, we are known for a strong school climate.

All of our teachers are native speakers of the target languages in our school...so we have a very diverse staff and a strong international cultural climate. We celebrate each language's culture with our students every year; we have information and activities for the students every day for a week and we end it with an evening of performances by the students in the target language and then food from the target language country...our students take the different cultures and teachers from around the world for granted and we have minimal derogatory racial or ethnic comments or issues. We have a very close, caring culture and our teachers are happy and stay with our school because it is like a family to them. This also applies to our English Language Arts teachers (we have 5; students receive 1 hour of ELA daily beginning in the 2nd grade). We provide our teachers with strong support and encourage them to grow in leadership, professional development and more. We are an IB World School

Great options for mid activities because of amazing teachers but need help with parent involvement to make it that much better.

Our climate and culture is solid, but always a focus. That work is never "done."

We have loads of community partners and are very connected to the neighborhood and various neighborhood groups.

Just a note re Student recruitment and retention - I think these are two different items and I would rate our organization as stronger on recruitment than retention at this point.

We have teacher leaders that implement professional development practices and support new teachers/leaders.

Teacher retention, including that of new teachers is fairly good. We have had instances where some teacher spend their entire teaching career at the schools.

We have knowledge of PBIS and can train.

Preliminary efforts with equity audit - may be too early to share, not sure but it also can be useful to share when the work is fresh and early.

Have some very strong practices to share on student recruitment with personalized approach with families that sets a precedent for welcoming them into the community, including a summer program for some new students.

For the most part, we grow our own teachers through our substitute teachers' recruitment.

Needs Improvement Areas: [Comments from survey respondents.]

These are all areas that we are working on but additional ideas, strategies, perspectives, and resources are welcome.

There is not a strong diversity in the teaching staff at our school. I believe that a lot of effort has been put in to this at the administrative level, but it hasn't led to retaining diverse teaching staff. Last year two male teachers were hired, that was nice.

Diverse staff.

We need more financial stability to offer options for some diversity areas.

The areas I highlighted are all named priorities in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity work plan. Our next step is to deeply undertake race equity work.

Lots are marked as satisfactory that over time could be strengths - such as the work on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Although we have international staff, they sometimes lack cultural competencies related to their students' population.

We are working on ways to improve teacher and teacher assistant retention. Also, we are working on improving community engagement with the neighborhood. Finally, we need to improve the pipeline for teachers.

We could use some more guidance on teacher retention, though folks leave for a variety of reasons; sometimes it's a mutual acknowledgement of lack of fit, or life circumstances that the school can't prevent but worth examining further.

While teacher retention is average or below average, it is still high when compared to other industries. "More money" is not the solution to keep teachers but ensuring an environment where they are valued and feel valued. Discipline codes and limiting distractions in the classroom are paramount to learning. When accomplished, teachers feel valued. To do this, parent involvement is key. The success of a student is equally the responsibility of the parent, as is the student, as is the educator/teacher. In an industry that is not merit-based, finding ways to reward high-performing teachers are a major challenge so resources, teamwork, and innovative methods can help reinforce in ways a paycheck cannot.

We could have a better handle on best plans and implementation strategies around discipline and behavior issues.

We would love new strategies for interacting with our most at risk students behaviorally.

We struggle year after year to fill all student seats to meet our cap. It takes a tremendous amount of energy and time from multiple staff members and many volunteers. While we met cap for several years, we were far below for the current year and are trending the same for 2019-20.

A huge issue that impacts student outreach is an extremely high level of family mobility, and many students transferring (often out of district) - requiring us to backfill these student seats in the coming year.

Kindergarten student recruitment has been the most difficult last year and this year.

We struggle with enrollment and retention for a variety of reasons, especially in Kindergarten.

We have developed many strong strategies around these challenges that we would love to share, and yet it is still our area where we need the most help. These are certainly indicative of district-wide challenges, and challenges in our community, but I still believe that our school should be able to perform more strongly than the district.

Our retention and recruitment efforts are good, but as a full language immersion school, it is a problem to refill vacancies. We only accept students in kindergarten or 1st grades, because of our language immersion model. Teachers never speak English to our students (except resource teachers). When students leave, due to moving away or other reasons, unlike other charter schools, we cannot fill vacancies in grades 3-8 unless the child has the ability to read, speak and understand a target language (Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and French). We need a pipeline to the many refugee students who are in Baltimore and already speak the languages we instruct in; it would help our school and the students who are new to our country.

Parents believe the school is doing fine and needs no help, so they don't get involved.

Our parent engagement is terrible as far as a PTO is concerned. BUT, we have great parent turnout for some school events (Culminating Events, performance, Student-Led Conferences.)

Parental involvement continues to be an area for improvement. Principals work hard to bring families to the school building. However, more parents and families respond well when food is a part of the program. This is a need that will continue to be problematic and difficult to address as it has to do with the economics of the community in which our schools are situated.

C. Additional School Attributes

Among "Additional School" attributes, the vast majority of charter school respondents gave high marks to cultivating positive operator and principal collaborations and getting teacher buy-in to a charter school's unique mission. Although in both cases, one respondent reported this as a struggle. Those respondents (4) suggesting they could use help with financing their facilities are double the number of respondents (2) who cite it as a strength. Clearly sharing some good practices around acquiring, renovating or expanding facilities would be well-received by yet another third of respondents (8) that pegged this as only satisfactory. Sharing practices and tips around tracking alumni success is the hottest topic throughout the entire survey.

Additional School Matters: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" on the following scale: [If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]						
Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1 - Needs Improvement; can use help	2 - Struggling some; maybe could use some help	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Very good; may have some tips to share	5 - A strength; we can support others with this	Rating score
Cultivating positive operator and principal collaborations	0 0%	1 4%	3 12%	11 44%	10 40%	4.2
Getting teacher buy-in to a charter school's unique mission	0 0%	1 4%	4 17%	11 46%	8 33%	4.1
Fostering a safe learning environment for children	0 0%	0 0%	4 17%	15 63%	5 21%	4.0
Preparing students for college or careers	0 0%	2 8%	7 29%	8 33%	7 29%	3.8
Developing students' interpersonal skills (working well with others)	0 0%	2 8%	6 25%	14 58%	2 8%	3.7
Use of technology to aid learning	0 0%	1 4%	13 52%	9 36%	2 8%	3.5
Acquiring, renovating or expanding facilities	4 17%	1 4%	8 33%	9 38%	2 8%	3.2
Tracking student success after graduation (as alumni)	7 29%	5 21%	6 25%	3 13%	3 13%	2.6

Strengths: [Comments from survey respondents.]

Finding ways to help students feel a sense of belonging and build on their strengths.

Our Principal and Operator work extremely well together, and it has taken some time to refine a clear separation of duties so that both work most effectively.

I think our principal feels supported in her work. She is fully engaged in all decisions.

Working with teachers and staff to understand and buy-in to the mission.

Teacher buy-in, strong leadership (including good Operator/Principal relationships), and developing a safe learning experience.

We've made significant improvement and investments in our facility over time with limited resources.

Our restorative practices work has created safe space for students.

This is a college prep school.

Our students learn through enquiry and collaboration. This helps them to develop strong interactive social skills. Our students have a safe learning environment. The exception is the few students who have emotional disabilities and will sometimes have episodes in the classrooms that are safety hazards to their classmates. Teachers are quick to deal with this, evacuating the students from the classroom, while they calm down the child having the problem and wait for the school psychologist to come and assist. We do not have gang or drug activity or weapons.

Because we own the building we have lots of unique things we can do and our staff loves being there and creating those opportunities.

We have expertise to offer on the facility front.

We have some practices to share on interpersonal skills - a part of the curriculum and something that is prioritized, including captured in report cards etc. We call it Grace and Courtesy.

We have good student to student relationship practices.

Every middle student (100%) complete Naviance.

Getting alumni data is hard, but we have some neat practices that may be worth sharing and can also learn from others.

Needs Improvement Areas: [Comments from survey respondents.]

We would like to see more of buy-in among teachers regarding the charter school concept.

We have had challenging principal / operator relationships, but right now and for most of our years, that works well.

We have been unable to find long-term housing for our school.

Our school struggles with MD laws in getting extra money and having to maintain and pay mortgage takes money away from education and education materials.

Financing facilities.

The largest concern is finding appropriate facilities that are affordable.

We struggle to find facilities and they are very costly...all maintenance and repairs come from per pupil funding, and because of the nature of our program, our school is expensive to run. Traditional schools do not have ELA teachers for elementary students; homeroom teachers instruct the subject. To maintain the purity of our program for the students, we do not want our homeroom teachers to attempt teaching English grammar, punctuation, etc. However, they do instruct their Target Language Arts, and many areas coincide with ELA instruction, such as theme, main idea, narratives, etc.

As an elementary school, more clarity on preparing students for college is needed.

We could always use support in preparing students for college and careers.

We seek strategies for successful tracking of students after graduation.

We need to develop a method of keeping in touch with and tracking our alumni.

We have not had a graduating class yet.

We do not have any measures in place yet for tracking student success after they leave us, and would like examples of best practices.

We could absolutely use help around tracking alumni. We could also use help with effective, targeted technology to support student learning.

We just completed our 10th year as a school and have begun discussions about tracking our Alumni, but we haven't started the process yet.

Please help us figure out how to track our alumni!!!!

While developing students is not rated at 1, there is a need to improve student interpersonal skills. This problem is more a societal issue than a school issue.

Mostly strong on these fronts, just not ready to share.

More interactive technology capacity.

Of course, funding matters. Not being able to always hire more staff or pay higher wages due to a lack of facilities funding is also a major challenge when 15-20% of our per-pupil budget has to go to our buildings.

This "National" anti-charter issue requires community partnerships on a legit, statewide scale. MD charters were here before the current political climate in DC and the time has come to have a real conversation about successful public education programs and how we can all help the moment we choose to educate each other vs. copy-pasting someone else's false agenda to go backwards when MD is well equipped with leaders and resources to propel our state and the rest of the union forward with our choices, if expanded and replicated, for public education.

D. Board Governance Attributes

Among "Board Governance" attributes, it appears most respondents have aced the fundamentals (e.g., financial oversight, conflict of interest, open meetings). One charter school respondent struggles in these areas and three or more respondents could use some help with an array of deeper issues, such as how to more effectively engage their boards in meaningful deliberations and goal-setting. At least one respondent flagged attendance as a problem and several need help with the selection of quality board members. Not surprisingly, a full two-fifths of respondents need help with fund development.

Board Governance: Based on your experience or interaction with your charter school board, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" on the following scale: [If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1 - Needs Improvement; can use help	2 - Struggling some; maybe could use some help	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Very good; may have some tips to share	5 - A strength; we can support others with this	Rating score
Financial oversight and budgeting	0 0%	1 4%	4 16%	8 32%	12 48%	4.2
Conflicts of Interest disclosure	0 0%	0 0%	5 22%	8 35%	10 43%	4.2
Open meetings and public records requests	0 0%	1 4%	6 25%	10 42%	7 29%	4.0
Effective meeting management	0 0%	3 12%	5 20%	11 44%	6 24%	3.8
Strategic planning and goal-setting	0 0%	3 12%	9 36%	6 24%	7 28%	3.7
Governance vs management	0 0%	3 13%	7 29%	10 42%	4 17%	3.6
Evaluation of the school leader	0 0%	4 16%	8 32%	7 28%	6 24%	3.6
Academic accountability	0 0%	1 4%	14 56%	7 28%	3 12%	3.5
Selecting quality board members	1 4%	3 12%	12 48%	9 36%	0 0%	3.2
Fundraising and resource development	3 12%	8 32%	8 32%	5 20%	1 4%	2.7

Strengths: [Comments from survey respondents.]

Our finance committee and fiscal management is strong and we could probably share in this area.

We review the budget and spending trends monthly. Our community just finished a strategic planning process that resulted in a five-year plan. It was then revisited to make sure items were being addressed.

Our financial management is excellent; our audits always have no errors, and 90% (or more) of our money is proven to be spent directly for the instruction of students. The Board has an annual retreat, in the school, the first week after students are released for the summer. We review the year's performance, what went well, what needs to improve, etc. We set goals for the coming year and also review our performance on the previous year's goals. The retreat includes Board members, some teaching staff, Admin staff and office support. The retreat also includes some professional development and is three days long.

Board meets on a regular basis. The board has a dedicated page within the website that provides basic general information, including the publication of meeting dates and membership.

Our board chair could speak about my evaluation and meeting management.

We have parents interested in being on the board wish we had more.

Engaged board.

We have built a strong board.

We are strong on financial management and management overall. Take that part very seriously and have expertise to tap.

Board members adhere firmly on matters regarding conflict of interest.

Although we are always learning, we may have some fundraising tips to share.

Needs Improvement Areas: [Comments from survey respondents.]

We need help with approaches to fundraising, sharing strategies for governance vs. management and efficient meeting management, consistent and specific structures for leader evaluation and academic accountability.

Maybe we could use assistance in consistently evaluating the ED.

We are working on a principal evaluation.

We need help and a change in the board to have different opinions on the board. Also because we struggle financially, it is hard to not cross boundaries of governance vs management. Also need help figuring out how to get more community involvement.

Our board's fundraising varies from person to person, and we don't have any good board-wide efforts or projects.

We are not as strong in fund-raising as we could be. We could use help.

We need support with fundraising and resource development.

We could do more to recruit and engage the Board, though they are talented and hard working and some are deeply involved.

Poor attendance and or an insufficient number of board members.

Prioritization

Survey respondents were also asked to prioritize the general areas of training and by a slim margin "Board Governance" edged out "Teaching and Learning" as being the most helpful area. Training around "General School Matters" was regarded as the area where the least help was needed. Comments were few, but at least one intuitive explanation is that the charter school is less likely to find expertise among its staff related to non-profit governance and Board members are likely to be more receptive to training coming from an outsourced third party.

Help us prioritize by ranking the following areas from 1 to 3 with "1" being the least helpful and "3" being the most helpful in terms of training areas your charter school needs. Use each number, 1-3, only once.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Least		Most	Rating score
	1	2	3	
Board Governance	6 26%	6 26%	11 48%	2.2
Teaching and Learning	8 35%	6 26%	9 39%	2.0
General School Matters	9 39%	11 48%	3 13%	1.7

Comments from survey respondents:

We do most of our own training.

Our non-profit could surely use board governance training! We are pretty solid on the other two areas.

E. Expansion and Replication Attributes

With most Maryland charter schools having been in operation ten years or more at this stage, increasing attention is turning to expansion and replication of quality charter school models. Thus, 20 of the 27 respondents opted into an optional area of the survey by answering affirmatively if their charter school was already part of a network of multiple sites or was considering expansion (adding grades) or replication (opening more sites).

Is your charter school already part of a network (multiple sites) or is your charter school considering expansion (adding grades) or replication (opening more sites)?		
Expansion or Replication?	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	20	74.0%
No	5	18.5%
No Responses	2	7.4%
Total	27	100%

Among the “Expansion and Replication” attributes, nearly three-fourths of survey respondents were confident they have the “it” factor – those components that transform a charter school into a high quality proven provider. On the flip side, the most serious concern is developing a talent pipeline of quality faculty and staff. Comments also reflect that securing adequate and affordable facilities is another major concern. There are several charter school networks in operation within Maryland who can potentially help guide the way for additional aspirants.

Expansion and Replication: Thinking about your approach to expansion and replication, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" on the following scale: [If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1 - Needs Improvement; can use help	2 - Struggling some; maybe could use some help	3 - Satisfactory	4 - Very good; may have some tips to share	5 - A strength; we can support others with this	Rating score
Assessing if you have "it" - high quality, proven provider	0 0%	1 6%	5 28%	5 28%	7 39%	4.0
Evaluating community, authorizer and political support	0 0%	0 0%	6 38%	6 38%	4 25%	3.9
Financial and operational planning for growth	0 0%	1 6%	7 41%	3 18%	6 35%	3.8
Understanding your school's readiness for growth	0 0%	2 11%	6 33%	5 28%	5 28%	3.7
Market analysis of need and demand	0 0%	2 12%	7 41%	3 18%	5 29%	3.6
Success at implementing accountability systems	0 0%	4 22%	5 28%	5 28%	4 22%	3.5
Expansion planning and capacity building	0 0%	4 24%	6 35%	4 24%	3 18%	3.4
Realigning board & staff leadership roles for system success	0 0%	4 24%	6 35%	5 29%	2 12%	3.3
Developing a "talent first" system for scaling up staffing	1 6%	5 28%	7 39%	4 22%	1 6%	2.9

Strengths: [Comments from survey respondents.]

We have been approved for replicating our school; our approval was based on our performance with our current school. We have the support of our new area's community; the most difficult aspect was to obtain a building.

The first school is 17 years old and we are in our 7th year. People need to know that it all takes time. Schools need to be intentional in all aspects to be sustainable and it takes TIME.

We have built great succession plans and talent pipelines within the school.

Strong political advocacy.

We have a leader with real capacity and courage to think big and then do the homework required to explore what is best for the school and the larger ecosystem ... and has a way of engaging the community, particularly internally to get input and hear feedback that seems promising and may be worth sharing. The leader also finds help where it's needed on key pieces, such as real estate, finance, etc.

Needs Improvement Areas: [Comments from survey respondents.]

We could use additional strategies regarding recruitment and systems to build capacity.

We want to expand our school from K-5 to K-8 and add middle grades. This has always been our plan and we hope to do so at our next renewal. We could use some assistance in getting ready to do so.

We would like to understand the market analysis through the charter school lens.

I think the school is mostly thoughtful, just not really ready to share with others and there are areas where we could learn from others - such as about realigning board and staff leadership roles and developing a "talent first" mentality - though maybe differently with our unique model.

What pressing worries do you have about expansion and replication?

[Comments from survey respondents.]

We know that expansion is not in our immediate plan as we need to strengthen academics first (namely PARCC). We are worried that the climate in the district is not amenable to expansion even if our track record and improvement warrants it. We are also worried about having (or finding) adequate physical space to accommodate an eventual expansion.

My general concern is convincing BCPSS that we are successful and that an expansion to middle grades would be useful to our school, the neighborhood and the district. The reliance on standardized test scores in evaluating our success is very limiting.

I'm concerned that the district will not appreciate our approach to middle school curriculum.

Navigating the timeline ('chicken or egg') while keeping all aspects moving forward.

Getting approval.

Checklists to stay on track.

The sustainability of charters.

Per pupil funding for charters.

I worry about getting lost in the weeds of all the things that have to get done and losing people's buy-in for the broader vision in the midst of what I assume will be a lot of change.

Finding teachers who qualify for State certifications and are native speakers of our target languages; this is always challenging.

Readily available instructional resources and highly qualified teachers who understand the vision of our charter.

I worry about the capacity of teachers, as we have been consistently growing.

Finding talented staff and finding adequate facilities.

Financing the facility.

The inequity faced by a lack of facilities funding for all MD public charters worries the expansion and replication more than all other topics by exponential fold.

I think the plan now is the best thing we have to offer Baltimore and hopefully won't be too taxing on the current school. I want to make sure we can leverage the opportunity to actually

both position us for a successful replication while also always enhancing versus taking away from our current school. I am thinking about recruiting and retaining talent, continuing to refine our systems of support and accountability, keeping demand up and our diversity, etc.

We are done expanding - finally! The gift of time for staff, students and families was crucial!

II. Interviews Summary

In tandem with the survey, Greater Capacity Consortium conducted nine interviews with a few community-based organizations that have education reform missions and with the charter school "liaison" personnel for the school systems. The liaisons reflect the perspective of the authorizer that approves, reviews and renews charter schools. Interviews were conducted with personnel from the six Maryland public school systems that currently authorize charter schools – Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Chesapeake, Frederick and Prince Georges. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a recent charter school applicant and with senior staff associated with the Abell Foundation and the Fund for Educational Excellence. Collectively, their observations are captured in this section.

Strengths.

Most interviewees view a few charter schools in the State of Maryland to be true exemplars and find the vast majority to be doing a credible job and performing better with time. Those school systems overseeing fewer charter schools cited more overall strengths. In the two systems where charter schools are more plentiful (Baltimore City and Prince Georges County), stellar examples did abound, but it was also acknowledged by both the school system personnel and community representatives interviewed that a few of the charter schools in those systems are struggling. The few struggle to the point of needing to demonstrate substantive improvement to justify their continued existence, especially since the charter school movement is predicated on accountability.

The human assets were most often cited as a key strength of charter schools, especially the teachers and other instructional staff. School leadership was often cited as a critical indicator of overall success; some who lacked it were struggling. One interviewee commented that one can easily tell a principal "who cares about kids, supports the staff and sets high expectations for both."

Several schools were identified as being strong on teacher empowerment, encouraging teachers to collaborate and innovate. Largely, the devotion of teachers was deemed impressive and several schools had done well at encouraging grade level team work. A charter school implementing a national model was commended for its strong program for the faculty of professional preparation and continuous learning.

Several charter schools were hailed for strong language arts. A few stood out as immersed in the whole child and one such school also received high marks for integrated arts instruction. Many do well at innovative instructional practices, including portfolio assessments. Some with high proficiency rates on statewide assessments get credit for being attentive to scaffolding and unpacking state standards.

It was noted that several Baltimore City charter schools come together often, including during a progressive education summit sponsored annually by one such school, and they do an effective

job as a consequence of supporting each other. Most interviewees felt more peer-to peer sharing should be encouraged statewide.

Generally, most of the existing charter school networks were regarded as stable and strong. At least one had not really scaled up, which was proving a challenge, but most benefited from spreading the overhead across a greater volume of students. One interviewee applauded a recent charter school replication in DC exurbs for having developed a strong brand identity.

The conversion charters were viewed as a compelling model and a few networks received high marks for the turnaround situations they were shepherding. It was acknowledged that these operators had more to manage in terms of obtaining parent buy-in whereas with a start-up, the fact that parents find the charter school and enroll their children, this entails more of a buy-in.

One charter school received high marks for instituting a transportation plan and committing to providing transportation for whom it's a barrier. The school had initial challenges, but has learned and refined the plan and it seems to be working. The same charter school also sought a lottery waiver in the interest of attracting more low-income students. The school system cooperated in the outreach to Title I schools and the charter school is phasing in its targets to increase its share of Title I-eligible students by approximately three percent per year to eventually be on par with the county-wide average.

Some charter schools in Baltimore City were applauded for their innovations in positive school culture and climate, restorative practices, meaningful pre/post school activities and support services for families. In general, attendance rates are higher in these schools (two-thirds above the system average), as is student retention year over year.

Needs Improvement Areas.

Most interviewees cited board governance as an area where more training is needed around the basics of conducting public meetings, navigating conflicts of interest, school budgeting, facilities financing as well as the special interplay with the school system under the Maryland law. On this latter point, more collaboration is needed between the system, principal and charter school board. One interviewee cautioned this is not always easy, as a lot of drama can come from parents on the board who may be keen on seeing a change now to benefit their children that is really not practical to undertake in the short run. Frequent open communication can go a long way to establish mutual trust.

More thought should also go into board structure and composition; are charter schools recruiting board members with diverse and relevant skills in finance, human resources, marketing, fund development and related areas?

It was noted that most charter school applications provide an unrealistic budget that underestimates such costs as facility acquisition and ongoing maintenance. Charter schools need more assistance with financial planning.

Principals, too, could use guidance on the budgeting process and managing a multi-million dollar budget. Since this is not typically part of the responsibilities of a principal in a traditional school, more training is needed. While some charter schools employ an operations director who may oversee more of the financial matters, this is not always the case. More charter schools should figure out a way to separate academics from operations and better delineate the roles between an operations manager and principal.

Some interviewees felt charter schools need to be creative about how to exercise their independence or autonomy. Some assume “can’t” will be the school system response, but if it’s innovative and comes with a lot of forethought and a means to assess progress, there is a good chance the school system may allow it.

One interviewee would like to see charter schools address the true equity piece – that subconsciously educators too often see family (especially certain types of families and the communities they come from) as the barrier.

Several interviewees felt that charter school boards could set the stage better for having input into the evaluation of the principal, especially if they would propose measurable goals related to the unique features of their charter school missions.

Similarly, interviewees felt many charter schools could benefit from integrating their unique missions or visions into their accountability regimens so teachers are better able to model these unique attributes in their classroom while not risking too serious a deviation from curriculum that is standards-based. Just a ‘feel good’ mission statement is insufficient. While staff are going to give weight to their superintendents’ directives unless there are well-designed instructional practices supporting the mission-driven approach. Montessori and Expeditionary Learning were examples cited of approaches with sufficient heft that district-aligned teachers can get behind them.

More generally, an interviewee expressed a frustration that charter schools should be more nimble and have the edge on data-driven instruction; the data should prompt the interventions.

Charter schools should also be collecting evidence of progress every year (not just ahead of renewal) and through data points beyond state assessments or otherwise the school system has no choice but to judge the charter school on MSA/PARCC at the time of renewal.

One person suggested an interesting statewide activity would be to offer peer-to-peer site reviews to charter schools in the winter or spring of their third year of operation that would be similar to and prepare them for the renewal process that they are going to have to go through 12 to 18 months later with their authorizing school system.

Some charter school networks in Maryland are operating with thinner central staff than what is typically found nationally. Turnover is also a challenge; the networks would be more stable if they could sustain a team of people who centrally perform the back office operations as well as coach and mentor in key content areas, such as literacy and math. Alternatively, some networks are well-managed, but seem to be less innovative academically.

Several interviewees cited transportation as a challenge that perhaps could be dealt with collaboratively among charter schools in close proximity to each other. Other challenges were finding affordable and appropriate facilities and engaging in substantial fund-raising.

Some interviewees wish to encourage charter schools to do more self-reflection and engage in strategic planning, especially as they mature. Several believe charter schools seeking to replicate or expand should open more middle and high schools where there are fewer options. Charter schools should also cultivate a culture of advocacy to increase school and family touch points with the elected Boards of Education with the aim to deepen relations over time and not just in a “save our school” panicked mindset.

As a charter school movement, it was suggested more reflection is also needed. What are the successes and possible fail points; what are we learning from this charter school reform?

While many charter schools have healthy wait lists, some charter schools have student recruitment and retention challenges with buildings at less than capacity. Teacher retention rates are also uneven. There is a perception that charter schools employ more novice teachers and some walk away or are driven away due to lack of supports for them. Here, again, charter schools that excel at mentoring and coaching might be of help. Both topics – student and teacher retention – seem ripe for peer-to-peer sharing.

School System Supports.

Interviewees were also asked to address how they felt school system supports were most often deployed to support charter schools. Most cited assistance with school improvement plans and support for special education in terms of record compliance, staffing and learning supports.

Others said charter schools are invited to all professional development, including online resources. Some offer special support for literacy, math and student behavior interventions. Most school systems involve the principals of charter schools at monthly leadership meetings. One interviewee said their school system had engaged in some collaborative work to align Montessori with PARCC.

Several liaisons expressed a tug in providing supports as they need to remain neutral and objective as the authorizer. A few explained their liaison office was small (sometimes just one person) and the best they could do was to try to refer queries to the relevant offices within the school system. One interviewee had unsuccessfully petitioned its professional development division to dedicate a person to work expressly with charter schools. Another interviewee said, in practical terms, there is little to no real support being offered to charter schools. Yet another interviewee suggested MSDE should offer a primer on the Charter School Law for school system staff in other divisions who need to understand what their responsibilities are to provide food service, transportation or other ancillary services to charter schools.

A couple of interviewees noted that the recent award of the federal charter school program grant to MSDE has re-energized the conversation around charter schools. The prevailing attitude is that charter schools take money away from district-run schools. Most school systems are still sitting back and waiting and not trying to be strategic in integrating chartering schooling in a way that could provide options for students and families that otherwise are unavailable. Another interviewee suggested school systems should be more open to and encouraging of applications from founding groups and school leaders of color.

One school system said they are less receptive to an application that seems built out of parent dissatisfaction. In a growing school system, that individual suggested, a major area of parental concern ought to prompt a redress within the system to provide the alternative families seek. However, that same school system said it does look favorably on a charter school application with a unique educational dimension that fits an unmet need, especially if the applicant can demonstrate the capacity to deliver on it in a complete and quality way.

III. Survey Findings – General Comments

The survey posed additional open-ended questions of charter school respondents to further explore what challenges they face and what training supports they may have found useful.

In what ways has your local school system provided training or support?

[Comments from survey respondents.]

They support when we have specific issues. They help us navigate all the rules and regs they and the state set up.

The local school system does not provide training that is very helpful to charter schools.

No training has been provided through the district.

Very little.

Very little support from the school system.

They don't provide much help or guidance; we kind of train them on our successes.

Perhaps around some literacy practices, not sure what else.

Support with staffing, instruction and budgets.

We have received support around Special Education from the school district.

MSDE provides us with training on budgeting and compliance.

It has provided support in the past, but now it is charging the school for any and all professional development it provides for free to non-charter schools. We have opted out of paying; when we did, our teachers were allowed to attend but were not given the materials to take with them like the other teachers, because they came from a charter school!

Our relationship with the District has been positive and supportive both ways. We are not in favor of other authorizers for Baltimore.

The University allocates a budget beyond the drawdown to support student learning and other day to day operations of the schools.

They do not provide training for parents to govern. There are PD opportunities for staff, but they are all traditional school based - we have to use our limited PPA funds to support any relevant PD experiences.

As a network, we support our schools and our schools collaborate with the local districts well on necessary Teaching and Learning as well as General School Matters. However, with computer science and IT teachers in high-demand and teacher's salaries not being competitive to the markets in which these teachers are going to work (Gov.'t, Military, Tech), it is very difficult to devote 15-20% of our per-pupil budget to facilities, offer extensive STEM (robotics, rockets, ecology labs, LEGO labs, MakerSpaces, etc) and compete with salaries of the private sector

while collectively bargaining sliding scales not based on merit. We explain this reality and will continue to do so. We are transparent with our communities about the inequity and inefficiencies that we will have to endure to be successful. This training and support via transparency cannot be understated when onboarding. Teachers, parents, and students sacrifice to attend a public-charter so, in short, the ways in which our school systems provide training and support is to acknowledge this inequity and empathize in as many honest ways as possible while we attempt to maximize the potential of our student(s).

Setting aside funding and other policy issues (which are not the focus of this survey), what are the greatest challenges facing your charter school?

[Comments from survey respondents.]

Teacher recruitment, support, and retention (high levels of stress in this intense work).

Finding amazing teachers.

Recruiting program specific high-quality teachers is the greatest challenge facing us..

Curriculum alignment and teacher's recruitment in some content areas.

Academic results growing; growth in enrollment, finding really good teachers.

Aligning our school with the diversity of the county as our charter requires. There is a lottery that is unbiased, but there are other issues that prevent the diversity of the school from increasing (not enough bus service, misperception that our school is private, etc.).

Achieving full enrollment. Our current struggles here pose threats across the board when we cannot fully staff our model, and when we are in a position of weakness for renewal. Low PARCC scores closely follow as a threat.

Enrollment and attendance is one of our biggest challenges. Standardized test scores are our second biggest challenge.

Forced alignment with traditional style benchmarks.

Addressing the gap.

Getting kids to grade level or above.

Student academic growth – literary.

The incredible challenges facing our students.

Ensuring that every student, regardless of racial or socio-economic background, excels academically and is prepared for a bright future.

Making sure all students are sufficiently literate and have the skills to work at a reasonable wage.

Getting our teachers State Certification. Teachers from China, for example, can be certified teachers in that country, but when they come here, they have to take more classes and pass the

PRAXIS in English! They do not teach in English, but it is a struggle for them to pass the exam, especially the reading and writing. We should really consider a certification for teachers in immersion schools. If they want to teach in traditional, English speaking schools, then they can be required to take the reading and writing portion of PRAXIS, but only under those circumstances. It creates a lot of stress, many retakes, and many years to get our teachers certified. Our district only gives them two years to get it done, and it takes a lot of negotiating to get our teachers extra time.

The local school district's compliance-driven culture.

The school district is very unsupportive of charter schools.

It's a tough environment with scarce resources, political distractions, skepticism and fatigue.

Accommodating growth in the facility.

Facilities and special education funding.

Money.

Community involvement.

Building from the early childhood level.

Everything relates to funding in the end ... our challenges are appropriate facilities and behavior Intervention support.

Anti-Charter rhetoric that does not pertain to MD Charters but lawmakers and ill-informed influencers tend to stoke a fire that has no fuel beyond baseless fabrication.

The age of one of the school buildings. As a tenant, the typical terms associated with the tenant/landlord responsibilities are wanting.

Being able to use all our tools (as laws prevent some behavior techniques) and increasing the diversity of our leadership team.

We want everyone on staff to have true buy-in and deep belief in what is possible. We want to make sure we have consistent instructional leadership and that we are effectively tapping and lifting up the wise voices in our community already that can contribute so much.

Keeping the momentum going, never being complacent, always being hungry to do more and do better.

What other suggestions do you have for training? Include training outside your school that you have benefited from or have heard talked about positively? Be as specific as possible about topics, actual presenters or programs you admire, etc.

[Comments from survey respondents.]

Data analysis and management, dashboards to monitor key priorities related to strategic plans.

We provide training in RP, in developing climate and culture, in teaching vocabulary, in behavior management. We always want more effective training from the district but since they now charge for it, we do our own.

ATTENDANCE. We have a strong focus on attendance and remediating chronic attendance this year, and - with luck - we will have something to present to others about success. However, our chronic absence rates remain very high and higher than the district's, and turning this around is a huge need. We are beginning to work with Attendance Works as a consultant in this area, and will report back if they are a resource that we recommend.

We have found training via IIRP (Restorative Practices) invaluable and our only constraint is that we cannot afford to send as many people as we would have liked. We continue to bite off training small cohorts each year. I wonder if there would be some economy of scale in bringing IIRP to the alliance to train those of us who want to go deeper in this area. The district has a Restorative Practices department (maybe it's just one guy) but they have refused to offer this training to us as a charter school, even when I offered to pay for the service.

Ongoing training of Unconscious bias training; training on LGBTQ+ issues; more training for staff on our curriculum model (mainly project-based and place-based learning). Board governance training for board members.

This school is running along pretty well.

Teach to Lead - I admire Shayna Hammond's work.

There is an organization, I believe on the West Coast, that I have heard positive things about related to equity...I will try to find the name.

I participated in the Mini-MBA for Non-Profit leaders put on by the University of St. Thomas, and they had some wonderful professors. Specifically there was one who taught about long-term strategic planning who had a really interesting approach to analyzing your organization and make strategic decisions.

I feel like I could also benefit from a training on decision making.

I would like to see more training for both administrators and teachers on how to USE the data we get. We need to serve all students, in particular those who are struggling.

There is an organization in DC, Education Elements that works on personalized learning. They have trainings and resources that might be helpful.

We have benefited from International Baccalaureate workshops, Social Emotional Learning workshops, Whole Brain Instruction, Language Immersion workshops, STEM and STEAM workshops, Classroom Management workshops

KIPP School Leadership Program, Relay Graduate School of Education, Getter Better Faster Bootcamp.

How to create PPAs and other sources of funding.

Building relationships with parents.

Equity.

Developing teacher leadership.

Board governance.

Best practices for board business matters and operations.

Differentiated instruction.

Use of aides/para-educators in the classroom.

Speaking effectively to students/de-escalation of crises.

Using data to make decisions.

Special education compliance and special education finance.

I think peer to peer interactions that are more about building relationships when folks feel isolated and organically talking about common challenges and finding ways over time for folks to lean on each other and problem-solve can be the most helpful. Having role-alike connections can be helpful, too.

We would appreciate more outspoken messaging to protect the MD public charters that do not resemble the anti-charter rhetoric often used to distract and deny much needed support for our MD public charters. This community involvement is growing as more families are realizing the propaganda however, our MSDE and MD & local teachers unions could be more educational and helpful in protecting their public charter teachers and all MD Public Schools, including the 100% public schools known as MD public charters. All MD charter operators are not-for-profit and the general population supports school choice. Can we see this community partnership reality being mirrored in Annapolis? Local government circles across MD? No.

Training can be super expensive and a waste of time or just not relevant enough with what folks need.

Follow-up is always good to check-in and hear what other questions surface. Also make sure trainings are interactive and engaging and have norms that make everyone able to be comfortable and heard.

IV. Survey Findings – Demographic Characteristics

The following tables summarize the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents.

Primary Role related to MD charter schools	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Administration, faculty or staff at a charter school or network	13	48.2%
Board Member of a charter school or network	4	14.8%
Parent/guardian or community member of a charter school	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
No Responses	10	37.0%
Total	27	100.0%

Years of involvement with MD charter schools	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
less than 1 year	1	3.7%
1-5 years	7	25.9%
6 or more years	15	55.5%
No Responses	4	14.8%
Total	27	100.0%

School System (# of Charter Schools)	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Anne Arundel County (2)	1	3.7%
Baltimore City (33)	18	66.6%
Baltimore County (1 scheduled to open in fall of 2019)	0	0.0%
Frederick County (3)	1	3.7%
Prince Georges County (10)	2	7.4%
St. Mary's County (1)	2	7.4%
Other (not associated with a specific charter school or network)	1	3.7%
No Responses	2	7.4%
Total	27	100.0%

MD Charter Schools or Networks	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
ABI Schools (formerly Afya) [network]	1	3.7%
Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys	1	3.7%
Baltimore Curriculum Project [network]	1	3.7%
Baltimore International Academy	3	11.1%
Baltimore Montessori Public Charter Elementary School	4	14.8%
Baltimore Montessori Public Charter Middle School	2	7.4%
Banneker Blake Academy	1	3.7%
Carroll Creek Montessori Public Charter School	1	3.7%
Chesapeake Charter School (St Mary's)	2	7.4%
Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation [network]	1	3.7%
City Neighbors Foundation [network]	1	3.7%
College Park Academy	1	3.7%
Coppin Academy	1	3.7%

Creative City Public Charter School	2	7.4%
Green Street Academy	1	3.7%
Patterson Park Public Charter School	2	7.4%
Rosemont Elementary School	1	3.7%
Southwest Baltimore Charter School	1	3.7%
Total	27	100.0%

V. Survey Findings – Cross-tabulations and Ranking of Attributes

Several cross-tabulations on the demographic characteristics were performed, but they did not reveal much by way of cross currents in the data. Of slight interest was to compare the years of involvement with Maryland charter schools. Those respondents with less experience (1-5 years) were somewhat more likely to rate attributes higher than their more experienced counterparts (6 or more years). Generally, age and experience have the tendency to harden people's outlooks since with more living they may have had more hopes dashed, seen more attempts tried and failed, or will act less rashly and more methodically on potentially a longer time horizon. The respondent who commented about expansion and replication that "people need to know that it all takes time" was likely a seasoned veteran.

Below are the attributes for which there was a significant divergence in scores based on years of charter school experience. Issues evolve with the times as well. The more experienced respondent is probably less forgiving of the current level of parent involvement when thinking back to when parent activism fueled the charter school movement. The less experienced respondent may attach less value on anemic PARCC proficiency rates because federal policies place less weight on this standardized factor now (ESSA) than in bygone days (NCLB).

#	Crosstabs - Ratings by Attribute	All	Experience 1-5 years	Experience 6+ years	Experience Difference
46	Market analysis of need and demand	3.6	4.8	3.4	1.4
15	Student recruitment and retention	3.7	4.4	3.3	1.1
12	Parent involvement	3.2	3.7	2.8	0.9
4	Achievement on standardized tests (i.e., PARCC)	2.9	3.4	2.6	0.8
40	Understanding your school's readiness for growth	3.7	4.5	3.7	0.8
47	Evaluating community, authorizer & political support	3.9	4.5	3.7	0.8
17	Diversity, equity and inclusion	3.7	3.1	3.9	(0.8)

The following grid depicts all attributes sorted from high to low in overall ranking.

#	Crosstabs - Attribute Ratings (High to Low)	All	Experience 1-5 years	Experience 6+ years
1	Innovative curricular approaches	4.3	4.4	4.3
24	Cultivating positive operator and principal collaborations	4.2	4.4	4.2
31	Financial oversight and budgeting	4.2	4.6	4.3
32	Conflicts of Interest disclosure	4.2	4.5	4.3
23	Getting teacher buy-in to a charter school's unique mission	4.1	4.5	3.9
2	Individualized attention teachers give to support student learning	4.0	4.0	4.0
19	Positive school climate	4.0	4.4	3.9
26	Fostering a safe learning environment for children	4.0	4.3	3.9
34	Open meetings and public records requests	4.0	4.0	3.9
39	Assessing if you have "it" - high quality, proven provider	4.0	4.2	3.9
47	Evaluating community, authorizer and political support	3.9	4.5	3.7
5	Use of academic data to guide instructional decision-making	3.8	3.7	3.9
6	Use of academic data to drive student interventions	3.8	3.7	3.9
10	Special Education: compliance	3.8	4.1	3.6
27	Preparing students for college or careers	3.8	4.3	3.6
33	Effective meeting management	3.8	3.7	3.7
42	Financial and operational planning for growth	3.8	4.2	3.8
11	Teacher retention	3.7	4.0	3.4
15	Student recruitment and retention	3.7	4.4	3.3
17	Diversity, equity and inclusion	3.7	3.1	3.9
22	Developing students' interpersonal skills (working well with others)	3.7	3.7	3.6
38	Strategic planning and goal-setting	3.7	4.0	3.7
40	Understanding your school's readiness for growth	3.7	4.5	3.7
9	Special Education: instructional techniques	3.6	3.6	3.6
13	Support for families	3.6	3.7	3.6
14	Community engagement	3.6	3.6	3.6
36	Governance vs management	3.6	3.9	3.6
37	Evaluation of the school leader	3.6	3.9	3.5
46	Market analysis of need and demand	3.6	4.8	3.4
3	Coaching or mentoring of teachers	3.5	3.3	3.5
7	Differentiated instruction - students achieve to their full potential	3.5	3.7	3.3
16	Cultural competency of the staff	3.5	3.4	3.5
21	Use of technology to aid learning	3.5	3.7	3.5
29	Academic accountability	3.5	3.7	3.5
41	Success at implementing accountability systems	3.5	4.0	3.5
20	Behavioral assessment and intervention (e.g., restorative practices)	3.4	3.3	3.6
45	Expansion planning and capacity building	3.4	3.8	3.5
18	Creating a diverse pipeline of teachers	3.3	3.0	3.5
43	Realigning board & staff leadership roles for system success	3.3	3.5	3.4
12	Parent involvement	3.2	3.7	2.8
25	Acquiring, renovating or expanding facilities	3.2	3.5	3.3
30	Selecting quality board members	3.2	2.9	3.3
8	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	3.1	3.3	3.1
4	Achievement on standardized tests (i.e., PARCC)	2.9	3.4	2.6
44	Developing a "talent first" system for scaling up staffing	2.9	2.8	3.0
35	Fundraising and resource development	2.7	2.7	2.8
28	Tracking student success after graduation (as alumni)	2.6	3.2	2.6
Average		3.6	3.8	3.6

Exhibit A: Online Survey Instrument



Maryland Charter Schools Training Needs and Strengths Assessment

[Commissioned by the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) with grant support from the Charter Schools Office of the Maryland State Department of Education]

To thank you for taking the time to provide us your confidential input on this survey, you will be entered into a random prize drawing to win a \$100 gift card.

PLEASE READ THESE IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE SURVEY:

The results of this survey will be used to guide the development of trainings, workshops, webinars and other forms of technical assistance for charter schools in Maryland so they best address the key needs improvement areas as well as promote school-to-school sharing of strengths that respondents identify.

This survey takes an average of 30 minutes to complete. You can spend less time just checking boxes, although we encourage you to share your views!

Your individual responses will be kept confidential with data tabulated by Greater Capacity Consortium, an independent consulting firm, and published only in summary form. School identifiers will be shared with MAPCS for internal use only to follow up about training opportunities matched to the survey data.

The survey questions are grouped into the following general categories below:

- Teaching and Learning
- General School Matters
- Additional School Matters
- Board Governance
- Expansion and Replication (optional)
- Demographics

If you have questions or run into any technical issues with the survey, please email us (info@greatercapacity.us).

Proceed to the next page to get started. Thanks!

[Continue >](#)

Teaching and Learning: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" using the following scale:

"1" = needs improvement; up to "5" = a strength; our charter school does this well and we can support others with this
our charter school can use help with this

[If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Teaching and Learning Attribute	Needs Improvement; can use help	Struggling some; maybe could use some help	Satisfactory	Very good; may have some tips to share	A Strength; we can support others with this
	1	2	3	4	5
Innovative curricular approaches					
Individualized attention teachers give to support student learning					
Coaching or mentoring of teachers					
Achievement on standardized tests (i.e., PARCC)					
Use of academic data to guide instructional decision-making					
Use of academic data to drive student interventions					
Differentiated instruction – students achieve to their full potential					
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)					
Special Education: instructional techniques					
Special Education: compliance					

Please comment on areas where your charter school **needs to improve** that may have been prompted by the above listed "Teaching and Learning" attributes.

Based on the above listed "Teaching and Learning" attributes, please comment on areas that are **strong and working well** and may involve practices your charter school wishes to share with other schools. Be as specific as possible about topics and presenters.

Continue >

General School Matters: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" using the following scale:

"1" = needs improvement; up to "5" = a strength; our charter school does this well and we can support others with this
our charter school can use help with this

[If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

General School Attribute	Needs Improvement; can use help	Struggling some; maybe could use some help	Satisfactory	Very good; may have tips to share	A Strength; we can support others with this
	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher retention					
Parent involvement					
Support for families					
Community engagement					
Student recruitment and retention					
Cultural competency of the staff					
Diversity, equity and inclusion					
Creating a diverse pipeline of teachers					
Positive school climate					
Behavioral assessment and intervention (e.g., restorative practices)					

Please comment on areas where your charter school **needs to improve** that may have been prompted by the above listed "General School" attributes.

Based on the above listed "General School" attributes, please comment on areas that are **strong and working well** and may involve practices your charter school wishes to share with other schools. Be as specific as possible about topics and presenters.

Continue >

Additional School Matters: Thinking about your charter school experience, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" using the following scale:

"1" = needs improvement; up to "5" = a strength; our charter school does this well
our charter school can use help with this and we can support others with this

[If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Additional School Attribute	Needs Improvement; can use help	Struggling some; maybe could use some help	Satisfactory	Very good; may have tips to share	A Strength; we can support others with this
	1	2	3	4	5
Use of technology to aid learning					
Developing students' interpersonal skills (working well with others)					
Getting teacher buy-in to a charter school's unique mission					
Cultivating positive operator and principal collaborations					
Acquiring, renovating or expanding facilities					
Fostering a safe learning environment for children					
Preparing students for college or careers					
Tracking student success after graduation (as alumni)					

Please comment on areas where your charter school **needs to improve** that may have been prompted by the above listed "Additional School" attributes.

Based on the above listed "Additional School" attributes, please comment on areas that are **strong and working well** and may involve practices your charter school wishes to share with other schools. Be as specific as possible about topics and presenters.

Continue >

Board Governance: Based on your experience or interaction with your charter school board, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" using the following scale:

"1" = needs improvement; up to "5" = a strength; our charter school does this well and we can train others with this
our charter school can use help with this

[If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Board Governance Attribute	Needs Improvement; can use help	Struggling some; maybe could use some help	Satisfactory	Very good; may have tips to share	A Strength; can support others with this
	1	2	3	4	5
Academic accountability					
Selecting quality board members					
Financial oversight and budgeting					
Conflicts of Interest disclosure					
Effective meeting management					
Open meetings and public records requests					
Fundraising and resource development					
Governance vs management					
Evaluation of the school leader					
Strategic planning and goal-setting					

Please comment on areas where your charter school **needs to improve** that may have been prompted by the above listed "Board Governance" attributes.

Based on the above listed 'Board Governance" attributes, please comment on areas that are **strong and working well** and may involve practices your charter school wishes to share with other schools. Be as specific as possible about topics and presenters.

Continue >

Is your charter school already part of a network (multiple sites) or is your charter school considering expansion (adding grades) and replication (opening more sites)?*

Yes (which will take the respondent to the branching portion below of the survey)

No

Continue >

<<< ONLY IF YES >>>

Expansion and Replication: Thinking about your approach to expansion and replication, choose the most appropriate response from a low of "1" to a high of "5" using the following scale:

"1" = needs improvement; up to "5" = a strength; our charter school does this well
our charter school and we can train
can use help with this others with this

[If you feel that you do not have enough experience to rate a particular item, please skip it.]

Expansion and Replication Attribute	Needs Improvement; can use help	Struggling some; maybe could use some help	Satisfactory	Very good; may have tips to share	A Strength; can support others with this
	1	2	3	4	5
Assessing if you have "it" - high quality, proven provider					
Understanding your school's readiness for growth					
Success at implementing accountability systems					
Financial and operational planning for growth					
Realigning board & staff leadership roles for system success					
Developing a "talent first" system for scaling up staffing					
Expansion planning and capacity building					
Market analysis of need and demand					
Evaluating community, authorizer and political support					

Please comment on areas where your charter school **needs to improve** that may have been prompted by the above listed "Expansion and Replication" attributes.

Based on the above listed “Expansion and Replication” attributes, please comment on areas that are **strong and working well** and may involve practices your charter school wishes to share with other schools. Be as specific as possible about topics and presenters.

What pressing worries do you have about expansion and replication?

[Continue >](#)

<<< End of Branching >>>

Help us **prioritize by ranking** the following areas from 1 to 3 with “1” being the least helpful and “3” being the most helpful in terms of training areas your charter school needs. Use each number, 1-3, only once.*

- Teaching and Learning
- General School Matters
- Board Governance

Please add any comments about the decision behind your ranking.

In what ways (if any) has your local school system provided training or support?

Setting aside funding and other policy issues (which are not the focus of this study), what are the greatest challenges facing your charter school?*

What other suggestions do you have for **training**? Include training outside your school that you have benefited from or have heard talked about positively? Be as specific as possible about topics, actual presenters or programs you admire, etc.

[Continue >](#)

DEMOGRAPHIC SECTION – CONFIDENTIAL

It is very important that you complete this section to help us ensure that the responses that we receive reflect a cross-section of the charter school community. Your responses and the identity of your school will be kept confidential with data published in only summary form.

What is your primary role related to charter schooling?*

- Administration, faculty or staff at a charter school or network
- Board member of a charter school or network
- Parent/guardian or community member of a charter school
- Other _____

Indicate your years of involvement with charter schools:*

- less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6 or more years

Select the school system with which you or your charter school are most closely associated.*

[Note: Only the systems with charter schools appear in this list.]

- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Frederick County
- Prince Georges County
- St. Mary's County
- Other

[Continue >](#)

Browse the alphabetical listings below and select the charter school (or network) with which you are most closely associated.

[If you do not see your school, scroll to the bottom of the list and check the "other" entry.]

[alpha listing]

[Continue >](#)

Especially if you have identified specific needs or strengths of your school, may the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools follow up with you about your responses?
If yes, please add your contact information below.

[Note: Upon submission of your survey, you will be prompted to separately provide your contact information to be entered in the prize drawing.]

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip
Email
Mobile Phone

This is your last chance to provide any additional comments below.

Clicking the "continue" button will result in the submission of your survey responses.

[Continue >](#)

<<< Exit to a redirected web link>>>

*= required

Maryland Charter School Survey Random Prize Drawing

Your survey has been submitted. Thanks for your input. To be eligible for the random prize drawing of a \$100 gift card, please complete this form. There is a limit of one on-line entry per person. Note: The information you provide on this form will be stored separately from your survey responses.

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address:

Mobile Phone:

The MAPCS Survey Random Prize Drawing ("Sweepstakes") consists of one drawing on May 14, 2019. The Sweepstakes runs April 2, 2019 12:00:01 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) through May 13, 2019, 11:59:59 p.m. ET ("Sweepstakes Period"). The Sweepstakes is open to legal U.S. citizens who are at least 21 years of age at the date of entry. Employees, officers, and directors (including immediate family and household members) of MAPCS ("Sponsor"), and its suppliers, and any and all other companies associated with this Sweepstakes are not eligible to participate. Void where prohibited. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN.

How to enter -- Transaction Method: Eligible survey respondents are enrolled for the Sweepstakes following completion of the survey (one entry per person) during the Sweepstakes Period. Mail-in Non-Transaction Method: Eligible individuals may enter without making a transaction. To enter, send a 3" x 5" card containing the following information: your name, address, city, state, zip code, daytime telephone number and e-mail address (optional) in a hand-addressed U.S. first-class, postage-paid envelope to: MAPCS Survey Random Prize Drawing, 1500 Union Ave, Suite 1330, Baltimore, MD 21211. All mail-in entries must be original and handwritten and must be mailed separately (limit one entry per outer mailing envelope). Photocopies or mechanically or electronically reproduced entries will be disqualified. Mail-in entries received by May 13, 2019 will be eligible for the drawing. All entries become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned.

Click to review the [official rules](#) in detail.

Finish